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***Kernan highlights continued job growth;
Indiana added 4,100 new jobs in June***

Governor visits Carmel company that's adding 19 new jobs with state's help

Indiana had its sixth straight month of job growth in June, according to Gov. Joe Kernan, who emphasized the numbers while announcing state support for the expansion of Express Manufacturing in Carmel.

Kernan said the state added 4,100 new jobs during the month of June, the sixth straight month of positive job growth for Hoosiers. In all, 27,800 jobs have been added since June 2003.

"This is good news. We are seeing signs of an economy that is strengthening here in Indiana, in all parts of our state," Kernan said. "Do we have more work to do? Yes. And, at the state level, we are working hard every day to make sure that Hoosiers all across the state see some of this good news in their community."

The Indiana Department of Workforce Development compiles the numbers in conjunction with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The June job numbers, along with revised numbers for May, were released this morning. Revised numbers show Indiana actually gained 2,200 new jobs in May, up 600 from the preliminary number release last month.

Express Manufacturing is making an investment of more than \$500,000 in its expansion efforts, which will include adding 19 new jobs to its current 23 workers. The company designs and manufactures precision plastics and metal parts, as well as production level prototypes, for use in products ranging from orthopedic surgical instruments to future automobiles and SUVs.

Kernan announced that the state's support, totaling \$59,295, for Express Manufacturing's expansion. That support includes:

- \$11,296 from the Indiana@Work program for skills assessments and job profiling of potential and existing workers;
- \$20,000 in Incumbent Worker Training program funds for technology training four workers; and,
- \$28,000 Skills Enhancement Fund grant to help create 19 new jobs and train 19 current employees.

- more -

“With new programs like Indiana@Work, we are continuing to build off our efforts that have created a stronger business climate here in Indiana,” Kernan added. “We have cut taxes, even eliminated the inventory tax, and invested significant resources in job creation in recent years. Companies like Express Manufacturing are taking advantage of those resources and the result is they are putting more people to work.”

Dennis Pressler started Express Manufacturing in 2002. Pressler pointed out that the company’s focus on “lean manufacturing” has helped it remain competitive in a fast-changing industry.

“The skills of our people are our most important asset in meeting these challenges,” Pressler said. “It’s our job to devise a way of manufacturing and then quickly delivering quality products that meet our customers’ needs. The support from the state enables our people to continue to build skills in advanced manufacturing techniques to meet these needs and even take advantage of the ever-changing needs of our industry. This is key to our goal of doubling our operations over the next two years.”

Kernan said that small businesses like Express Manufacturing employ almost half of Indiana’s workforce. Recently, the governor has put in place several new programs aimed at spurring small business development.

“Small businesses like Express Manufacturing make up the heart of our state’s economy and are creating good jobs for Hoosiers,” Kernan said. “At the state level, we have strengthened our ability to be an active and significant partner in helping those businesses startup and continue to grow.”

Among other things, Kernan created the Office of Small Business Advocacy, which will serve as a one point of contact for small business owners. The office is charged with connecting small business owners with investment capital; reviewing regulations that impact entrepreneurs and making recommendations on how to eliminate unnecessary regulatory burdens; and providing important information health insurance and opportunities for cost containment and savings.

Additionally, the state now provides small business owners with a streamlined application process for obtaining training resources through the Indiana@Work program.

Indiana@Work, which is administered by DWD, helps businesses profile jobs within its organization and assess the skills of applicants for those positions, including identifying key training needs. Since Indiana@Work was announced by Kernan in January, the program has committed resources to provide nearly 18,000 skills assessments and more than 300 job profiles have been requested by Indiana companies.

The Incumbent Worker Training grant program is also administered by DWD. Any Indiana business is eligible to apply for the grant opportunity.

The Indiana Department of Commerce awards Skills Enhancement Fund grants to Indiana companies that undertake capital investment projects, to help defray the costs of training new and existing employees.

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